

Spirituality through the Liturgical Seasons (9)

Transcending Differences, the Light of the Gentiles

The Working Group for Discipleship Training
The Steering Committee of the HKSCH Church Policy Paper

Epiphanytide is a season for us to celebrate the Word become Flesh — God revealing Himself to the Gentiles, and the True Light shining on the whole world. The world of Jesus' time had already been splintered by boundaries erected to mark regional, ethnic, linguistic, religious, ... divides -- splitting people into factions. Without mutual understanding, ignorance has been the culprit in authoring many tragedies in human history, breeding ethnic hatred, and creating a living hell on earth.

As time marches on, cultural development and technological advances have shortened, or it seems, the distance between people. The Internet has made communication and understanding among different cultures easier. Conflicts and misunderstanding caused by the differences should have been mitigated. However, compared with a closed world two millennia ago, inhabitants of today don't seem to have gotten better very far. Evidence from our daily news headlines, people have gone on tearing ourselves apart over our differences. This has not decreased over the passing of time or with greater civility...

The God-revealing Christ is the ultimate salvation — the Light of the Gentiles — for people of all races, cultures, and even creeds. Christ's salvation for all people challenges every generation of the faithful : not to be complacent, not to insulate ourselves in our own self-righteousness, and to do so on the expense of excluding others, and to always leave room for those who differ from us. The light that God has shone on us shines upon those who we differ from. In the mutual respect and prayers for one another, we shall meet and embrace when we encounter one another in our journey toward the Lord's true way.

Meditation:

1. Ask God to open our eyes and our hearts, so that we can see clearly what and who we hold prejudices against and how those prejudices limits our understanding of His salvation.
2. Open ourselves to engage with those who are different with us — in their way of thinking, in their politics, or in the opinions they hold. Try to, through listening, find lessons for us to learn.
3. Pray for those whose opinions differ from ours; even pray for people we dislike. Have faith that the Lord's light shines, too, upon their lives.